

Dr. Rachel Shelden to discuss the political and social climate of pre-Civil War Washington, D.C.

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All events are camera friendly, and principals will be available for interviews.

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Penn State Scholar to give free lecture at LancasterHistory on Washington, D.C. political society in the 1850s

Dr. Rachel Shelden to discuss the political and social climate of pre-Civil War Washington, D.C.

Lancaster, PA (February 4, 2020) – On Thursday, February 20, 2020, Penn State University's Dr. Rachel Shelden will join LancasterHistory to explore the "Washington bubble" of the 1850s that left so many lawmakers unprepared for secession and war.

Traditional portrayals of politicians in antebellum Washington, D.C. describe a violent and divisive society, full of angry debates and violent duels that would cause ripples throughout the country. In *Washington Brotherhood*, Dr. Rachel Shelden paints a more nuanced portrait of Washington as a less fractious city with a vibrant social and cultural life and engagement among key political figures. This comradery would have consequences for how lawmakers dealt with sectional disputes, especially those involving slavery in the territories, and ultimately lead to disarray.

Rachel Shelden, Ph.D. is the Director of the George and Ann Richards Civil War Era Center and is an Associate Professor of American History at Penn State. She is the author of *Washington Brotherhood: Politics, Social Life, & the Coming of the Civil War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2013), which received honorable mention for the Wiley-Silver Prize for the best first book on the American Civil War and was a selection of the History Book Club. She is also co-editor,

with Gary Gallagher, of *A Political Nation: New Directions in Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Political History* (University of Virginia Press, 2012).

About The Event: The Regional History Colloquium is a series of scholarly presentations hosted by LancasterHistory throughout the year. Colloquium presenters are established and emerging historians who are thinking deeply about historical issues that relate to, or intersect with, the history of southeastern Pennsylvania and its wider borders.

Tickets: The event "*Washington Brotherhood*" will take place on Thursday, February 20, 2020 in Ryder Hall at LancasterHistory, 230 N. President Avenue in Lancaster. A speaker's reception and book signing by the author takes place at 4pm, followed by the main presentation at 4:30pm. The event is free and open to the public. Due to the popularity of the Regional History Colloquium series, **advance registration is required to guarantee a seat at the presentation**. Visit www.lancasterhistory.org/lectures to register online or call (717) 392-4633. Limited tickets still available. Questions and accessibility requests may be directed to info@lancasterhistory.org or (717) 392-4633.

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